Technology Toolbox Critique 

Many of these sites could be judged student centered when considering it for Adult Education, therefore I didn’t critique these based on K-12 (who are fearless anyway when it comes to technology) whereas many adults are apprehensive (me included) when learning new computer skills and surfing internet. Please read the cautionary note below. It’s difficult for me to comment on many of these tools since I have never used them nor have anything to compare them with. Please bear in mind that I am a beginner and have stayed close to home due to all the warnings about the web many years ago. This has caused me much apprehension along with learning a new computer and Word 2007.

**CRITIQUE SCALE**

**(Caution! The author of this critique is new to these web tools and their usages so judgments may be debatable).**

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| **Ease of use** | **1= very difficult** | **2=difficult** | **3= patience** | **4=fairly easy** | **5=very easy to learn** |
| **Cost** | **1=have your employer buy it. [http://tbn2.google.com/images?q=tbn:OvcSqAjzzX3s0M:http://www.grudge-match.com/Images/taz.gif](http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.grudge-match.com/Images/taz.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.grudge-match.com/History/taz-bunyan.shtml&usg=__L7r1CMjwGyE_5aLRKgcljd2zgpQ=&h=307&w=248&sz=19&hl=en&start=80&sig2=bW-1dCrK6IucJCCMkLY04g&tbnid=OvcSqAjzzX3s0M:&tbnh=117&tbnw=95&prev=/images?q=tasmanian+devil&gbv=2&ndsp=18&hl=en&sa=N&start=72&ei=5vNjSsubIZL8sgOYsbFn)** | **2=Will the cost justify the means?** | **3=worth considering** | **4=acceptable** | **5=FREE** |
| **Instructional Value** | **1=0 instructional use.** | **2=could be of value but is there something better?** | **3=worth considering** | **4=worthy of consideration** | **5=an excellent web tool** |
| **Tweek-ability**  **Ability to customize** | **1=none**  **[http://tbn2.google.com/images?q=tbn:I3kiLsw-zh4CdM:http://cosmokitty.files.wordpress.com/2008/04/taz.png](http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://cosmokitty.files.wordpress.com/2008/04/taz.png&imgrefurl=http://cosmokitty.wordpress.com/category/bad-puddy/page/2/&usg=__YEuG_za808OASQLtsQtt266wabk=&h=259&w=259&sz=116&hl=en&start=36&sig2=4PQ6pvZbSlha24FWiA6dpQ&tbnid=I3kiLsw-zh4CdM:&tbnh=112&tbnw=112&prev=/images?q=tasmanian+devil&gbv=2&ndsp=18&hl=en&sa=N&start=18&ei=ZfNjSovsJaHQswPap6ln)** | **2=some** | **3**  **manageable** | **4=lots of creative room** | **5=full creative process** |
| **Security &**  **Safety** | **1=don’t go there** | **2=if you like risks** | **3**  **questionable** | **4=stable** | **5=safe and secure** |

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| Type &  Name | Ease of Use | Cost | Instructional Value | Tweek-ability  (Ease in Customizing) | Safety and Security |
| Aggregators |  |  |  |  |  |
| Google Reader | **4**  **Fairly easy to use** | **5=free** | **5**  **Good tool personally and one to share with students.** | **4**  **Customization and organizational choices** | **5**  **trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |
| Social Bookmarking |  |  |  |  |  |
| Backflip | **4**  **Fairly easy to use** | **5=free** | **4**  **Possibly a good tool for groups in gathering categories & sites for their projects.** | **4**  **Customization and organizational choices** | **5**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |
| Search Tools |  |  |  |  |  |
| Squidoo | **-4**  **Fairly easy to use but so busy it was a bit distracting and annoying.** | **5=free** | **? Lots of ads….**  **This tool seems to be more like the above two categories.**  **I got a bit confused at first on its purpose.** | **4**  **Customization and organizational choices are acceptable.** | **5**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |
| Webstart |  |  |  |  |  |
| Protopage | **4**  **Although easy to use it will require some time to learn.** | **5=free** | **5**  **I think this has lots of potential for instructional capabilities in a wide variety of uses.** | **5+**  **Customization and organizational choices are very good.** | **5**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |
| Weblogs |  |  |  |  |  |
| Edublogs | **4**  **Although easy to use it will require some time to learn.** | **5=Free** | **5**  **This tool has lots of room for instructional capabilities to use by the instructor. Once you work with it a few times, it would be a valuable tool for instructors.** | **4**  **Customization and organizational choices are good.** | **5**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |
| Wiki’s |  |  |  |  |  |
| Wikispaces | **4**  **The tutorial was helpful.**  **It took me a little patience but was easy to use after spending some time.** | **5=Free** | **5+**  **Has good instruction value for class to learn, share, observe and comment.** | **4**  **Some things are limited but overall provided the necessary tools to make this a good choice.** | **5**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |
| Web-based Word Processing |  |  |  |  |  |
| Google Docs  & Spreadsheets | **4+**  **I thought this site fairly clean and easy to work with. Tutorials were helpful.** | **5=Free** | **5**  **This tool could have beneficial uses for the student, instructor or personal.** | **4**  **After watching the tutorial, Google has enough selections to make this more customized.** | **5**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |
| Creative Writing |  |  |  |  |  |
| Glypho | **4**  **Seems easy to use but has no history, help, or about tab.** | **5=Free** | **5**  **This would be a good instructional tool for writers, literature or using within a class. A neat idea for group collaboration and voting.** | **1-5**  **Is it possible to use this just for a class instead of the web?**  **Creativity lies in the writer.** | **5**  **Seems safe but couldn’t tell for sure except by the agreement terms.** |

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| Type &  Name | Usability | Cost | Instructional Value | Tweek-ability  (Ease in Customizing) | Safety and Security |
| Web-based Spreadsheets |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zoho sheet | **?**  **Personally, why would I want to learn a new menu bar? It seemed too similar.** | **5=Free** | **yes** | **yes** | **yes** |
| Assessment, Surveys, Polls |  |  |  |  |  |
| Rubistar | **4+**  **I thought this was easy to use and a helpful site to share a large area of topics on assessments.** | **5=Free** | **5**  **Teacher centered but the sharing of assessments could benefit the student by providing the instructor with different approaches to learning.** | **4**  **Customization and organizational choices are good.** | **5**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |
| Podcasting & Screencasting |  |  |  |  |  |
| Audacity | **3 ?**  **This could be a bit too involved for me so a three is the best I can do.** | **5=Free** | **4**  **Excellent tool for teachers and students to make their own presentation or tutorials.** | **5**  **As *Audacity*  says……**  **“Free as in freedom of speech.”** | **5**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |
| Video |  |  |  |  |  |
| You Tube | **4**  **Fairly easy to use and click into.** | **5=Free** | **5**  **Excellent resource for teachers and students both in topics, research, and creation .** | **4**  **Customization comes in variety of choices for the creative process.** | **5**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |
| Photo and Drawing |  |  |  |  |  |
| Google SketchUp | **4+**  **Excellent tutorials that is clear and precise. These should help in the ease of using this tool** | **5=Free** | **5**  **Excellent resource for teachers and students both in art, sciences, etc.** | **5**  **Lots of room for the creative process** | **5**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |
| File Sharing |  |  |  |  |  |
| Allmydata | **3**  **Depends on one’s**  **ability and need.** | **5=Free** | **3**  **Personal use or a computer literacy class.** | **3?**  **Manage your data storage** | **5+**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure**  **Interesting claims** |
| Webquests & Games |  |  |  |  |  |
| Nobelprize.org  Educational games | **5**  **Easy to use games with wide variety of educational topics ranging from literature to blood-typing.** | **5=Free** | **5**  **Test your knowledge….**  **Valuable resource for personal, student and teacher. Lots of selection of simple yet unique games in a variety of educational settings.** | **4**  **I gave this rating a 4 due to the amount of selection to choose from.** | **5**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |
| Presentation Tools |  |  |  |  |  |
| SlideShare | **4-**  **The tutorial should make this user friendly and presents the different avenues this tool can be used for making it more understandable** | **5=Free** | **4**  **Personally, this seems to be for personal use or the instructor but as with many web tools …..It depends on the instructor’s determination in how it might be beneficial for the student’s learning such as in the arts, business, marketing etc..** | **5**  **You create your own slides entirely as you do in PowerPoint.** | **5**  **Trustworthy**  **safe and secure** |